

# News Release



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Photos available.

(Photo credit: Photo courtesy of California State Parks)

## State Park Restoration Project

### *A Meandering Stream Returns to Sierra Meadow*

SOUTH LAKE TAHOE – A stream course altered by construction of a sewer line through a Sierra meadow has been restored to its natural meandering state by California State Parks, in conjunction with River Run Restoration, Watershed Science, and Haen Engineering.

Located approximately one mile upstream from the confluence of Angora Creek the Upper Truckee River, the meadow had been severely disturbed by a sewage project in the area during the 1960s. Land use impacts, including sewer construction and grazing, had degraded the stream as well as wildlife habitat and water quality in the area.

When the sewer line was constructed, Angora Creek was captured by the disturbed zone, and began flowing straight along the same straight course. The stream deviated from its original winding path to flow in a straight line directly from manhole to manhole for approximately 2,000 feet. With no curves, it picked up speed and the result was more power to erode its bed and banks. The stream cut down its bed, lowering the water table. The meadow dried out and critical habitat was degraded.

California State Parks restored the stream by filling in the old sewer channel and creating a new meandering channel for the stream course. The new 3,800-foot long stream channel mimics the shape and layout of the former channel. Its curvy path is more shallow and narrow than the eroded channel, which will now cause water to spread out onto the meadow more frequently and will raise the elevation of the groundwater in the area, improving habitat. Both the new restored channel and the old captured alignment were re-vegetated using native plants. A  $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile section of the creek and 20 acres of adjacent meadow were restored by the project.

“Visitors to the meadow now see a natural stream and very little indication of the sewer line that cut through the meadow,” said State Parks engineering Cyndie Walck, who was in charge of the project for State Parks. “It’s a beautiful setting in a very natural state.”

The project site is located just north of Meyers, and about 2 miles south of the city of South Lake Tahoe, in El Dorado County. The project was funded by California State Parks, California Tahoe Conservancy, and the Lahontan Water Quality Control Board.

The restoration project has met its goals of improving meadow habitat and water quality. Results include decreasing erosion, enhancing wetland and riparian habitat, and improving water quality. In addition, restoration of the creek bed elevation as well as the meandering of the stream has restored access to the meadow floodplain, raising groundwater elevations, increasing sediment deposition and nutrient removal, and improving meadow health.

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